GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2740
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2002
SHIP IN WESTERN COAST
GADDE RAMAMOHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI;MOHAN RAWALE

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coast Guard find a ship abandoned off in Western coast on July 6, 2002;

(b) if so, the details in this regard along with the name of the country to which the ship belongs;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (d): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2740 1.8.2002

A merchant ship reported sighting of an abandoned merchant ship `MV Al Murtada` on 3rd July, 2002 in position 84 nautical miles west of Ratnagiri (110 nautical miles south of Mumbai). Coast Guard Ship Vijaya was sailed to monitor the movements of the vessel and boarded her on 6th July, 2002 and subsequently anchored the ship about 5 nautical miles of Devgarh (155 nautical miles south of Mumbai). During the preliminary search of the vessel, two AK 47 rifles with words `ALLAH` and `YUSUF` inscribed in Urdu were recovered. On further rummaging, 3 loaded magazines of AK 47 bore (74 rounds) were also recovered. An explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of Navy also embarked the ship on 9th July, 2002 to sanitise the vessel of any explosives.None were found. As intimated by International Maritime Bureau the last owner of the ship is Mr. Assem Nidal Beaini, Lebanon.

Enquiries have revealed that the ship had a crew of 16 members which included Somalians-6, Syrians-4, and Lebanese-4 besides 4 Indians. It developed some snag in mid-sea during its journey from Somalia to Dubai and remained floating in mid-sea. On receiving an SOS from the ship, US ship `Vicks Burg` came to their rescue and airlifted on 16th June, 2002 all the crew members to another vessel `MV Stolt Spray` which was sailing towards Kandla Port.Finally, the latter ship berthed in Kandla on June 18/19, 2002 and thereafter all the foreign crew members left for their respective countries via Mumbai after completion of immigration formalities through local Shipping Agent at Kandla. All the four Indian crew members on board the vessel Al Murtada have been identified.